

# **IOWA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL**

## **2006 - 2007 ANNUAL REPORT**



Iowa  
**Vocational  
Rehabilitation**  
Services

*Finding solutions. Generating success.*

State Rehabilitation Council  
Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services  
510 East 12th Street  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

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# From the Chair

***Craig Cretsinger***

December 31, 2007

To the Honorable Chester J. Culver, Governor, State of Iowa:

The Iowa State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is pleased to present the 2007 Annual Report.

In partnership with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS), Department of Education, we seek to maximize resources to ensure that people with disabilities achieve their independence through successful employment and economic support. There will always be Iowans needing the individualized employment services provided by IVRS to achieve meaningful employment outcomes. Each Iowa citizen is at risk of becoming disabled. Disability occurs within all cultures and economic strata. The pool of Iowans with disabilities includes individuals moving from school to work, those incurring accidents or serious disease/illness, and people who are aging.

The SRC, through our committee structure and experience with the disability community, has provided meaningful input to IVRS and the State of Iowa. During the past year we provided advice regarding the IVRS State Plan to provide rehabilitation services, completed outreach activities to identify and assess needs of Iowans with disabilities, supported IVRS staff to increase awareness and seek new approaches to service delivery, and actively pursued additional funds to serve eligible individuals and move them from a waiting list to active services.

We are pleased to report that more than 90% of those Iowans successful through IVRS services remain in Iowa to work and pay taxes. Our latest research reflected that the 5 year return on investment per client was \$9.27 for every \$1 in state tax dollars spent on rehabilitation. The SRC is proud of the success of IVRS as an investment in Iowa's future.

Sincerely,



Craig Cretsinger  
Chair



## From the Division Administrator

### *Stephen A. Wooderson*



December 31, 2007

To the Honorable Chester J. Culver, Governor, State of Iowa:

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS), a division of the Iowa Department of Education, is committed to providing expert, individualized services to Iowans with disabilities to achieve their independence through successful employment and economic support. Our vision is to be a respected leader that delivers innovative services to better the lives of Iowans with disabilities.

This past year has been a year filled with increased capacity, increased results and a renewed vision. IVRS met and exceeded all of our federally-mandated employment related standards for FFY 2007. The increased state appropriations contributed greatly to this success by permitting for the filling of vacancies and extending the availability of the service dollars.

Field staff work was aligned to maximize the skills of the qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor. This positively impacted our outcomes by focusing on direct delivery of services when possible, and transferring case management processes to staff trained to perform those tasks. It also allowed us to stretch both our service and administrative dollars to benefit our consumers.

Of greatest significance is the reduction of the waiting lists for services. By January of 2008, for the first time since May of 2002, IVRS will be able to clear all waiting lists. At one time IVRS had as many as 5,500 persons with disabilities waiting to access our services. The field staff has been key to that success by working to provide direct services, thus reducing costs, and continue to manage cases in a manner that is efficient and timely.

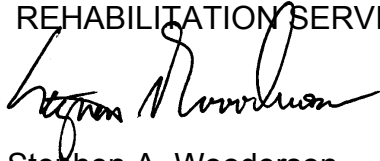
I wish to extend my thanks to our partner, the State Rehabilitation Council, for their support and guidance through this past year. Our Council has been led by two champions for persons with disabilities; Mr. Craig Cretsinger of Spencer, Iowa and Ms. Mari Reynolds of Des Moines. The SRC plays a critical role in our ability to get our message out to our constituencies and provides us with invaluable advice and guidance on our policies and procedures.

Last, but not least, the staff of IVRS is the pearl of State Government. Their devotion to quality services is unquestionable; their focus on the Mission, Vision

and Guiding Principles is unyielding. As we move into yet another new year, it is my continuing pledge to challenge old beliefs, meet higher standards and expectations, work closely with our partners, improve communications, utilize our resources wisely, and celebrate our achievements.

Sincerely,

IOWA VOCATIONAL  
REHABILITATION SERVICES

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen A. Wooderson", written over the printed name.

Stephen A. Wooderson  
Administrator



# State Rehabilitation Council

**2006 - 2007**



## Mission

“Iowans in partnership with IVRS to assure that people with disabilities meet their employment, independence, and economic goals.”

## Introduction

The Iowa State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is a body of citizens, in partnership with the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS), appointed by Governor Chester J. Culver, under the authority of the Rehabilitation Services Act of 1973, as amended, to provide guidance and advice on issues impacting rehabilitation in the State of Iowa. The Council reviews, analyzes, and advises the IVRS regarding the state’s vocational rehabilitation programs.

## Establishment of the SRC

The Iowa State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) was established in 1993 as mandated by the 1992 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act. The SRC was originally established as an advisory council, and later the name was changed with the 1998 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

## Council Duties

**Review, analyze, and advise** the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) regarding the performance of the responsibilities of IVRS under Title I, particularly responsibilities relating to:

- Eligibility;
- The extent, scope and effectiveness of services provided; and
- Functions performed by IVRS that affect or that potentially affect, the ability of individuals with disabilities to achieve employment outcomes under Title I.

### **In partnership with IVRS:**

- Develop, agree to, and review State goals and priorities in the State Plan.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program and submit reports of progress to the Commissioner in accordance with the State Plan.

**Advise IVRS** regarding the activities authorized to be carried out and assist in the preparation of the State Plan and amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations required by Title I.

**Conduct a review** and analysis (to the extent possible) of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with:

- The functions performed by IVRS;
- Vocational rehabilitation services provided by State VR agencies and other public and private entities responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under the Vocational Rehabilitation Act; and
- Employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services under Title I, including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with such employment outcomes.

**Prepare and submit** an annual report to the Governor and the Secretary on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs operated within the State, and make the report available to the public.

**To avoid duplication of efforts and enhance the number of individuals served,** coordinate activities with the activities of other councils within the State, including:

- The Statewide Independent Living Council;
- The advisory panel of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- The State Developmental Disabilities Council of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act;
- The State Mental Health Planning Council; and
- The State Workforce Investment Board.

**Provide for** coordination and the establishment of working relationships between IVRS and the Statewide Independent Living Council and centers for independent living within the State.

**Perform such other functions**, consistent with the purpose of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, Title I, as the State Rehabilitation Council determines to be appropriate, that are comparable to the other functions performed by the Council.



## Membership of the SRC

The Council must be composed of at least 15 members who are appointed by Governor Culver. Membership includes representatives from:

- ◆ Statewide Independent Living Council;
- ◆ The Parent Training and Information Center;
- ◆ Client Assistance Program;
- ◆ Qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor;
- ◆ Community rehabilitation program service providers;
- ◆ Four representatives of business, industry, and labor;
- ◆ Disability groups that include: individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities; and representatives of individuals with disabilities who have difficulty representing themselves;
- ◆ Current or former applicants for, or recipients of, vocational rehabilitation services;
- ◆ State educational agency responsible for the public education of students with disabilities;
- ◆ State Workforce Investment Board;
- ◆ Administrator of the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services as an ex-officio, non-voting member.



# Activities of the SRC

(October 1, 2006 – September 30, 2007)

## Committee Activities

The SRC established three committees in its Bylaws: Outreach, Finance, and Planning and Evaluation. Each committee established Objectives and Activities/Tasks to reach those objectives. The ones for this time period are set out below.

### **OUTREACH COMMITTEE**

#### **COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES FOR FY'07:**

1. Request additional state funds to meet federal match.
2. Continue development and assist local offices in receptions for employers, legislators, etc.
3. Continue to develop success stories for distribution.
4. Recruit new SRC members.
5. Disseminate information to members that requires attention.

#### **ACTIVITIES/TASKS TO REACH OBJECTIVES:**

1. Legislative Reception is scheduled for February 28, 2008.
2. Determine amount of state dollars needed to meet federal match.
3. Send position paper to members for approval.
4. Determine waiting list significance on economic development and Return on Investment.
5. Develop position paper – color coded with above map.
6. Share responsibility for recruitment with all Council members and other councils, commissions, and boards.
7. Send letters of recognition to all IVRS staff or other groups who assist with success.

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

#### **COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES FOR FY'07:**

1. Provide general education to the Council on financial operations.
2. Influence State funding decisions.

#### **ACTIVITIES/TASKS TO REACH OBJECTIVES:**

1. Educate SRC on budget offer process.
2. Educate SRC on non-federal match requirements.
3. Develop and chart history of recent IVRS budget issues.
4. Communicate SRC responsibilities to Governor and Legislature.
5. Estimate VR capacity if fully funded, calculate return on investment.

## **PLANNING AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

### **COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES FOR FY'07:**

1. Review and recommend changes based on the results of the client satisfaction survey.
2. Review and recommend changes to the State Plan.
3. Complete Annual Report.
4. Review and become knowledgeable of Agency policy.
5. Conduct needs assessment as required by the State Plan.

### **ACTIVITIES/TASKS TO REACH OBJECTIVES:**

1. Partner with ESSRTC to develop a new procedure for determining satisfaction of consumers.
2. Recommendations will be ready for approval and immediate implementation following the spring meeting.
3. Review, discuss, make recommendations and amendments to the Title 1 State Plan and attachments at spring and summer meetings.
4. Annual Report due in November. Have committees submit activities at each SRC meeting for this report.
5. Review Agency's State Plan.
6. Review and make recommendations to Agency's Strategic Planning Team at summer meeting.
7. Review and make recommendations to the Needs Assessment in the State Plan for discussion at the winter meeting.

## **Input and Recommendations to IVRS**

- SRC recommends that third party match sources equal no more than 15% of the IVRS budget.
- SRC recommends development and implementation of a plan for serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing consumers, and to establish targets for representation in the caseload and successful employment outcomes for this population.

The SRC membership hosted a legislative reception to educate members of the Iowa legislature and others about IVRS, its services and those whom we serve. This was held in February 2007, and at this reception IVRS Supervisors were in attendance to visit with their respective legislators. Sixty-eight legislators attended the reception. In addition, a successfully placed client from the Polk Des Moines office of IVRS was also in attendance to advocate for IVRS based on his positive experiences. Information on IVRS successful clients was presented on a county basis, which the legislators found helpful. A data sheet about each IVRS area office had been prepared and was presented to each legislator representing one or more of the counties served by that area office. A position paper (found at the end of this report) spelling out what the SRC would like the legislature to do was also distributed.

## **Impartial Hearing Officer Recruitment**

IVRS continues to search for qualified candidates to perform the function of an impartial hearing officer. Currently there are only two hearing officers, and only one officer who will work outside of a 30 mile radius of Des Moines. IVRS continues to request assistance from the SRC in identifying and recruiting hearing officers.

## **SRC Member Recruitment and Appointments**

SRC members recognized the importance of having a full council meeting as a requirement of the Rehabilitation Act. They recruited individuals with disabilities to seek appointments to the SRC by Governor Culver. Some members contacted the Governor's Office encouraging that appointments be made in a timely manner. This has resulted in a full council, fully meeting the requirements in the Rehabilitation Act.

## **Waiting List**

During Federal Fiscal Year 2007, the IVRS Waiting List was reduced to the point that all clients who are Most Significantly Disabled go immediately into services upon eligibility determination, and clients who are Significantly Disabled can be accepted in the month following eligibility. Some clients who are Others Eligible have been placed into services since October, 2007. The reduction in time on the waiting list has been due to careful financial management and direct service delivery instead of purchasing services. The number of clients being removed from the waiting list and placed in an active status has been identified as the result of a statistical budgetary formula that has proven accurate.

## **Customer Satisfaction Survey**

During Federal Fiscal Year 2007, the State Rehabilitation Council has reviewed the Client Satisfaction Survey process. The process of sending the survey that was developed in FY 01 mailed surveys at the end of the month in which the client's file was closed in either Status 26 or Status 28 to improve the response rate. Each year the satisfaction survey results improved on each of the items. A subcommittee was formed this year to review a process developed by the SRC of the New York Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities with the support of the Employment Service Systems Research and Training Center (ESSRTC). The questions ask for more detailed information on job placement and satisfaction with work and with overall quality of life for clients whose cases were closed. The findings in New York were very positive and useful, with improvements already made in policies and procedures as a result. The ESSRTC has offered to use their funding to expand the survey to Iowa and to tie the results back to Case Review data. The subcommittee has also recommended developing a separate survey to be administered to clients while they are in a service status to determine if there are ways to improve the process.

## **IRSS**

The Iowa Rehabilitation Services System (IRSS) is a software development project intended to replace the aging VRAP/VRCU mainframe case services system in use since the 1970s. The project was suspended in 2006 in order to allocate additional funding to case service expenditures. The project was restarted in 2007 when sufficient funding became available. IVRS discovered an emerging technology that is hoped to speed development and enhance maintainability of IRSS; that technology is Microsoft SharePoint. With the switch in software platforms, IVRS contracted with a different consulting firm to help develop and implement IRSS.

Project goals are to improve efficiency by automating processes, eliminate processes that consume time but do not add value, decrease the amount of time required to pay a vendor, eliminate processes that introduce errors, improve access to information, and be maintainable by existing IVRS information technology staff. IRSS is being developed in phases. Phase 1 will include Case Management and Financial Services functions. Later phases may include functionality for Contract Management, Vendor Management and Financial Management as well as enhancements to existing functionality.

For IRSS to be successful, it must meet the needs of the business. IVRS staff knows our business needs best. Numerous agency staff provides input on the project through planning, design and development meetings. Before implementation, IVRS staff will test IRSS and then train staff how to use it. Project plans call for implementation of Phase 1 during 2008.

# IVRS Leadership in the Nation

*Fiscal year 2007 was a year for national leadership for Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services*

## VR-Business Network

Workforce development and retention of workers at all skill levels are two of the major issues facing small and large businesses today. Nationally, public VR agencies have developed a National Network of 80 state agencies engaged in a coordinated effort to develop relationships that add value to both the business and to individuals with disabilities.

These national efforts compliment and support Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation's statewide commitment to the vision of *"assisting business and industry to meet their human capital needs by establishing mutually reciprocal relationships to place/retain qualified individuals in employment."* Throughout local and state strategic planning efforts, IVRS recognizes business and industry as a valued customer and has committed agency resources to identify and respond to human capital needs now and in the future. Examples of value-added services that IVRS offers Iowa business include:

- 1) **Pre-employment** services to respond to future employment needs and provide college and other related training to prepare future workers. IVRS can also connect these future employees with companies through internships, mentoring opportunities and customized (or on-the-job) training.
- 2) **Recruitment** and referral of qualified applicants.
- 3) **Retention** resources to support current employees who develop or acquire a disability.
- 4) **Staff training** on disability awareness, customer service or other topics related to disabilities in the workplace.
- 5) **Consulting, technical assistance and support.**
  - a) Workplace accommodations and assistive technology.
  - b) Financial incentives including access to tax credits and/or deductions available for hiring or accommodating people with disabilities.

# IVRS Leadership in Iowa

*In 2006 – 2007, IVRS undertook new ventures to provide innovative services to persons with disabilities*

## The Iowa Model for Supported Employment

The Iowa Model was the outgrowth of a collaborative effort with Community Rehabilitation Programs, County Administrators, Department of Human Services Case Managers, and County Case Managers to improve the provision of services to IVRS clients. During this year partners came together in a retreat to identify what was not working in the old system of supported employment and design a model that will more effectively result in outcomes for clients who are most significantly disabled. IVRS invited partners to look at Supported Employment Services and how they are provided, as well as creating opportunities to work with our partners in new ways. Through the process IVRS and DHS collaborated on developing a shared cost system that complements both missions and maximizes resources while avoiding duplication.

One of the objectives in developing a new model for supported employment was to decrease recidivism for clients receiving Supported Employment Services while decreasing duplication of services. Another area of concern was the difficulty in coordinating services across 99 counties with 99 different service systems and communication methods. IVRS will be taking a closer look at the data to see what impact the Model has had in regard to those issues. IVRS will also try to identify what services impact employment outcomes the most and what are best practices in the delivery of those services.

## Iowa Youth Leadership Forum

In partnership with the Iowa Division of Persons with Disabilities and the Iowa Department for the Blind, IVRS sponsors the Iowa Youth Leadership Forum (YLF). YLF is an innovative leadership training program for high school juniors and seniors with disabilities. Twenty-three individuals participated from across the State of Iowa in this intense five-day training program.

Information is shared on occupational and career choices, the history of disability legislation and advocacy, and assistive technology for independence. Barriers to personal and professional success are identified and individual plans are developed to deal with those barriers. Individual participants develop a personal

leadership plan that will be implemented to assist with their successful transition into the world of work or into a post-secondary environment.

Goals for the forum are to increase employment and self-sufficiency for young people with disabilities, improve each participant's knowledge of the resources available to assist them in becoming successful adults, and expose the participants to professionals with disabilities who are recognized leaders and role models.

Students with disabilities who are involved in post-secondary training were invited to attend the college leadership forum (CLF). Eight participants were involved in a three-day training program located at Iowa State University. Participants were students with disabilities, and the training was targeted at empowering them to reach their employment goals. Forum topics included setting goals toward transition and independence, ADA and self-advocacy, principles of leadership, the experience of disability, technology and resources, reasonable accommodations, resume writing and job search skills. Each student is matched with a career mentor who provides insight into their occupation and career field of interest and provides advice on presentation and career development steps.

For both the Youth Leadership and College Leadership Forums, all participants are eligible IVRS or IDB clients. The Iowa Division of Persons with Disabilities provided each IVRS or IDB Counselor a feedback summary on each individual participant that can assist with employment plan development issues. Future goals of the program are to continue to find additional ways to integrate Post Secondary Transition issues and Post Secondary preparation into the Youth Leadership Forum as well as to continue in focusing on employment based practices.

### **Entrepreneurs with Disabilities**

The Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program (EWD) is designed for the IVRS or Iowa Department for the Blind client whose goal is to achieve self-sufficiency through the operation of a business. The EWD program is a collaborative effort between the Iowa Department of Education, IVRS, Iowa Department for the Blind, and the Iowa Finance Authority. At the end of FFY'07, the vendor with whom this service was contracted decided to no longer provide the service. As a result, a great opportunity emerged and IVRS designed a new method of delivering this service that should prove more efficient and enhance the accountability and outcomes of the program.



The purpose of the EWD program is to provide technical and financial assistance to qualified individuals with disabilities who are seeking self-sufficiency by establishing or expanding a small business. Through the EWD program, IVRS provides clients with:

- feasibility studies and market research;
- technical assistance;
- business and marketing consultants (who work directly with the entrepreneur);
- assistance in leveraging money to establish a business;
- post-business support and follow-up;
- equipment purchase for starting or expanding a business.

Technical assistance is provided to each applicant as he/she works to start, expand, or acquire a business. The applicant works cooperatively with the consultant(s) to ensure active participation in the business planning/development process.

Financial assistance may be provided for the purpose of purchasing business equipment, rent, or other start-up, expansion, or acquisition costs identified in an approved business plan. Total financial assistance provided to an individual shall not exceed 50% (up to \$10,000) of the financial package.

During the past Federal Fiscal Year 2007, 103 EWD applications were requested, 68 were completed and 19 new businesses started operations.

### **Governance Group**

In Iowa strong collaboration among state agencies interested in strengthening employment services to lowans with disabilities has resulted in the creation of a **Governance Group** of seven agency leaders who meet on a quarterly basis. IVRS' administrator facilitates the activities of the group, who in 2003 developed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) designed to establish an ongoing commitment to collaboration at all levels of service delivery. This MOA continues to provide a foundation for collaboration and ongoing resources to local administrative and service staff as well as providing a forum for sharing current and future best practices among partners. Indeed the work of the Governance Group has been lauded by the Social Security Administration at a meeting in Washington, D.C. in November 2007, concerning its work in developing a Ticket to Work system that collaborates to achieve outcomes.

Currently the Governance Group provides oversight for the following initiatives –

Federal Initiatives:

- Disability Navigator Grant (funded through SSA);
- Iowa Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Grant (funded through SSA).

State Initiatives:

- System change efforts in the identification and services to welfare recipients with disabilities through the creation of Promise Jobs Disability Specialists (a collaborative effort through DHS, IWD and IVRS);
- Employer Disability Resource Network of state and federal partners are working together to “identify, develop and mobilize resources, supports and services that will add value to Iowa business hiring persons with disabilities.

The Improving Transition Outcomes Grant (funded through DOL) has been completed and achieved great recognition for its work in achieving programmatic innovation in key rural areas of the state. The lessons learned from these projects will help guide future activities in state transition initiatives.

## **Assistive Technology**

Many IVRS clients can benefit from assistive technology, so IVRS hired a Counselor Specialist who serves the entire state evaluating the client’s needs, identifying appropriate assistive technology to meet those needs, and providing training on how to use the technology once it is purchased. This individual also works with business and industry to determine ergonomically correct environments for workers to minimize work related injuries. While previously IVRS had an agreement with ISU to provide this service, the indirect costs of that agreement were too high and it was determined that IVRS could more efficiently respond to the needs of the client and the business community by providing this service from staff resources.

# IVRS Partnerships in Education

*As a division of the Department of Education, IVRS continues to serve students with disabilities at all levels of secondary and postsecondary education. Partnering with education professionals is an important activity of the division to effectively provide rehabilitation services.*

## Iowa High School Districts

Recognizing the need to assist youth with disabilities transition into the world of work, IVRS assigns a rehabilitation counselor to every high school in Iowa. With the progress made on the waiting list, IVRS expects to see an increase in the number of students referred.

Proactively working with students, IVRS can assist the schools in developing a meaningful high school program where the students begin to realize Iowa's Promise. Counselors meet with students and demonstrate that as caring adults they have resources that can serve the students in developing goals for themselves to be successful in living, learning and working environments. Through a program of counseling and guidance, informed choice activities, collaboration with schools, and connecting real work experiences with the high school curriculum, students not only identify vocational goals to pursue but realize the connection between what they learn and their purpose in life.

## Iowa Regents, Private and Community Colleges

IVRS maintains a staffed office on the campus of thirteen of the fifteen community colleges in Iowa and maintains intensive service arrangements with the three Regents institutions. IVRS college counselors work closely with college personnel to ensure that IVRS students with disabilities receive necessary accommodations. While the colleges are required under the American's with Disabilities Act to provide access to their programs, services and supports, IVRS works with the student to achieve success through appropriate accommodations and services.

## State Alignment Grant-Improving Transition Outcome

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services administered Improving Transition Outcomes, a grant funded project specific to youth with disabilities ages 14-24 with the goal of creating a community-wide system of inclusion, support, and

engagement for youth as they transition into their adult roles. Products include innovative community demonstrations that are sustaining and replicating; MyTransitionIowa.org, a statewide website specifically for youth and family members; and an on-line data collection system categorized by the Guideposts for Success. Outcomes include significantly increased referrals to VR, youth-directed vocational exploration resulting in pursuit of employment or post-secondary education, and transition focused community collaboration teams. VR has been a critical partner at the state and local levels. The grant funding concluded on 9/30/07.

### **Transition Alliance Programs (TAP)**

The Transition Alliance Program (TAP) was established as a result of recommendations from the Iowa Transition Project and is designed to address identified gaps in services to youth with disabilities. The TAP is a joint venture between the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and local school districts, area education agencies, the Department of Human Services, community colleges, and the business community. Together these partners develop the structure of the program, monitor its implementation in participating schools, and evaluate each program's procedures and outcomes, consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The program focuses on assisting individuals with disabilities to transition from school to employment by providing career exploration, paid and unpaid work experience, post-secondary planning, vocational skills training, job skills preparation, life skills training, job coaching supports, job development and job placement. The goal of the TAP is that through the development and implementation of a new pattern of services for youth with disabilities, individual participants will increase their opportunities for successful employment in the competitive labor market.

Special features of the program include:

- year round (12 month) services;
- services provided in community based settings;
- provision of necessary and individualized job supports to achieve competitive employment;
- follow-along for a minimum of one year after employment;
- follow-up per individual need through age 25;
- community based independent living skills training;
- community based workplace social skills training;
- connection of work and school to promote a course of study that is meaningful and motivating.

In Fiscal Year '07, there were eleven Transition Alliance Programs operational. IVRS successfully rehabilitated over 104 students during the fiscal year through the provision of these services which is a slight increase from last year when 100 students were successfully rehabilitated.

Due to staff capacity issues and restrictions in funding, no additional TAPs will be added this fiscal year. There have been requests from other districts to enter into an agreement with IVRS to provide TAP services. The staff capacity issue remains a limiting factor in being able to expand.

### **Iowa Department of Education**

IVRS and the Bureau of Student and Family Support Services (BSFSS) collaborate extensively on meeting the needs of students with disabilities. IVRS is a member of the Special Education Advisory Panel, which is composed of educators, parents, students, and interested community members. IVRS and the BSFSS developed an interdepartmental agreement to enhance collaboration and communication at the local level in serving students as they transition from school to post-school activities.

Collaboratively BSFSS and IVRS joined forces to develop systemic change in the schools in Iowa. As such, an RFP was issued for high schools and AEAs to work with business and industry to redesign their curriculum to prepare a workforce for the global economy and meet the standards established by No Child Left Behind. The first grant was awarded in October 2006 for planning, and the implementation phase of the grants began October of 2007. Reports from the planning grants revealed that schools learned a great deal regarding a disconnect between the curricula and the needs and expectations of business. The implementation phase will provide guidance into "Best Practices" for students in preparation for a global economy.

# IVRS Partnerships with Iowa Communities

*IVRS continues to strengthen and expand services to Iowans with disabilities by establishing solid partnerships with local community programs.*

## Iowa's Promise

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services is a participating partner in the work group of the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development (ICYD) and Iowa's Promise. The goal of these initiatives is to ensure that all Iowa youth have the opportunity to be safe, healthy, successful and prepared for the future. To that end, state agencies have made a commitment to work with their regional and community partners to help build capacity to serve young people and connect their own programs and initiatives to collaboratively support state and local youth development efforts. IVRS supports the ICYD and Iowa's Promise framework and has promoted the five promises within our organization:

- Ongoing relationships with **caring adults**;
- **Safe Places** with structured activities during non-school hours;
- **Healthy start** and future;
- **Marketable skills** through effective education;
- **Opportunities to give back** through community service.

## DMACC Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)

This year IVRS launched a cooperative agreement with the Des Moines Area Community College, Iowa Department for the Blind and the Veteran's Administration. The purpose of the agreement is to organize individual agency efforts into a collaborative, proactive, customer-based activity that leverages resources of each organization to improve access for persons with disabilities to the Central Iowa labor market.

## **Project Goals**

- Business and Industry: To increase outreach to business and industry through the delivery of technical assistance, consultation and training by IDB, VA and IVRS staff.
- DMACC students: To bring the employment life and academic experience for students with disabilities into balance through practical application of learning.
- DMACC faculty and staff: To increase the numbers of persons with disabilities employed on all DMACC campuses.

By February 2008 we anticipate having implemented numerous strategies in the Des Moines area.

# IVRS Continuous Quality Improvement

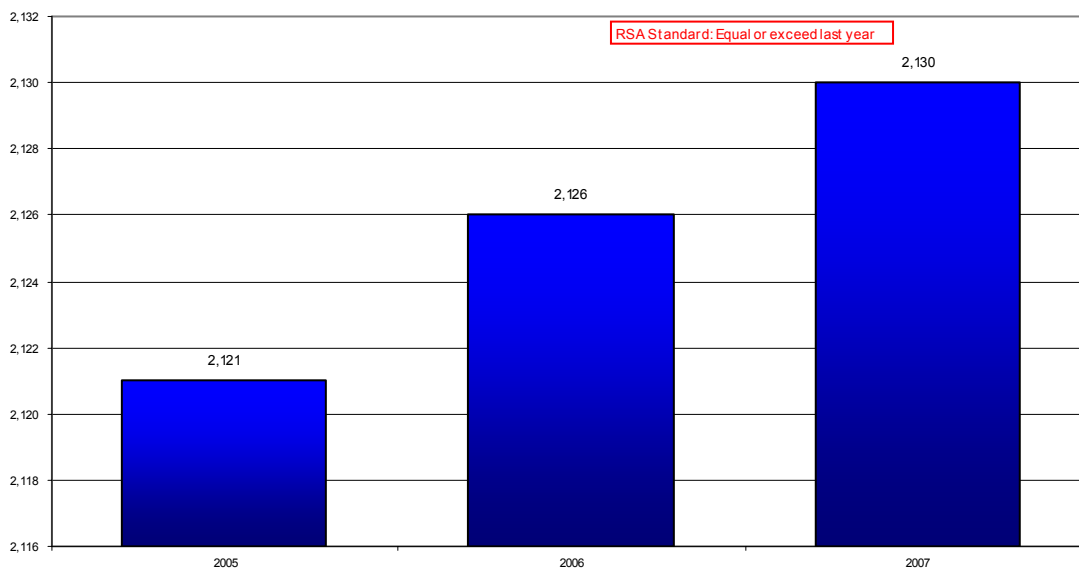
*For the past three years, IVRS has seen steady and significant improvement in successful outcomes.*

IVRS continues to see an increase in services to individuals with most significant disabilities. Average Hourly Earnings for clients who enter competitive employment exceeded the federal standard for the last three years. After rehabilitation, a majority of IVRS clients consistently show their own earnings as their primary source of support.

## RSA Performance Standards and Indicators

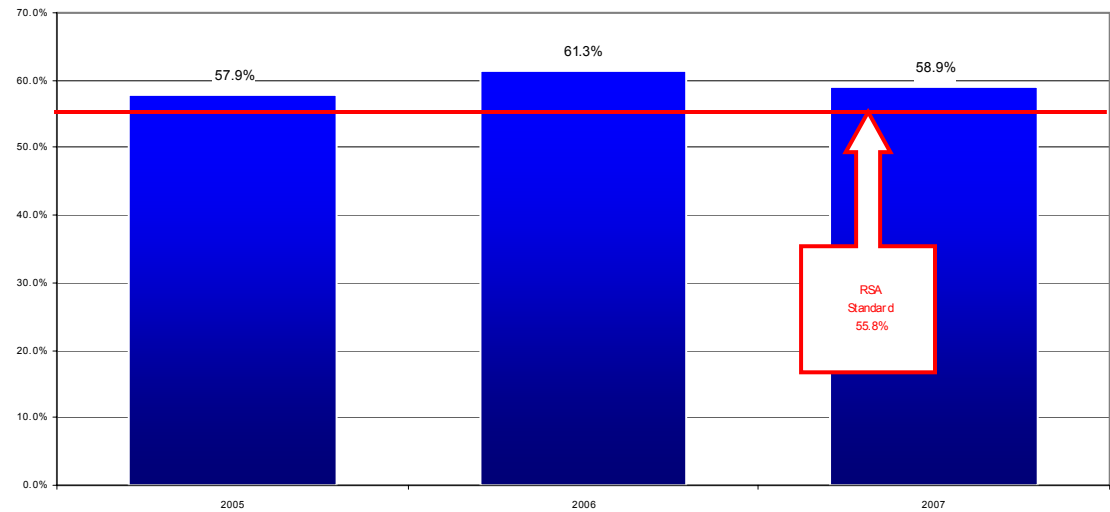
### VR Standard 1 = Employment Outcomes

#### 1.1 Number of Employment Outcomes

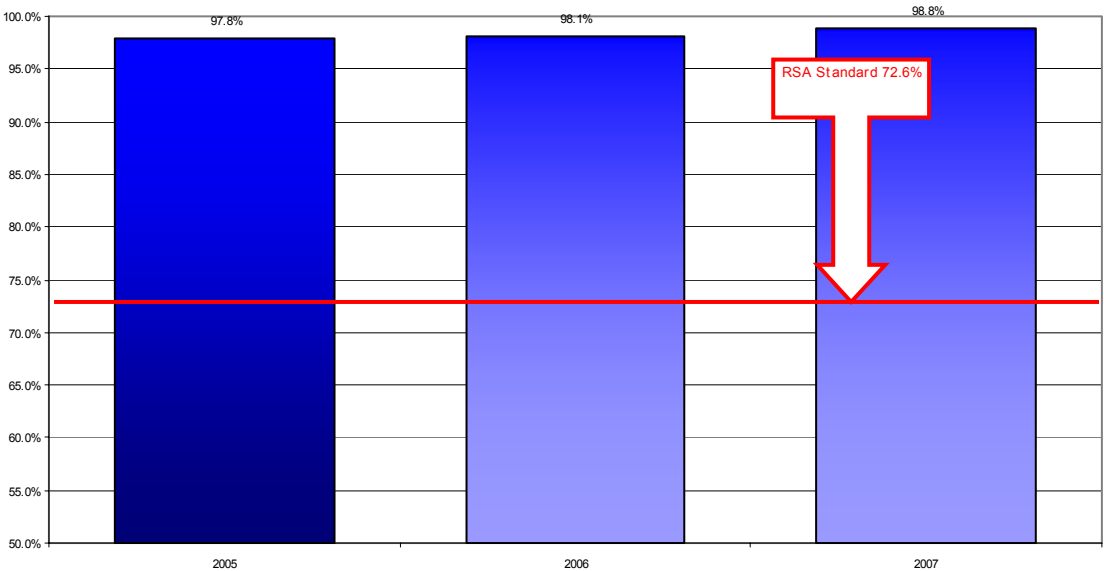




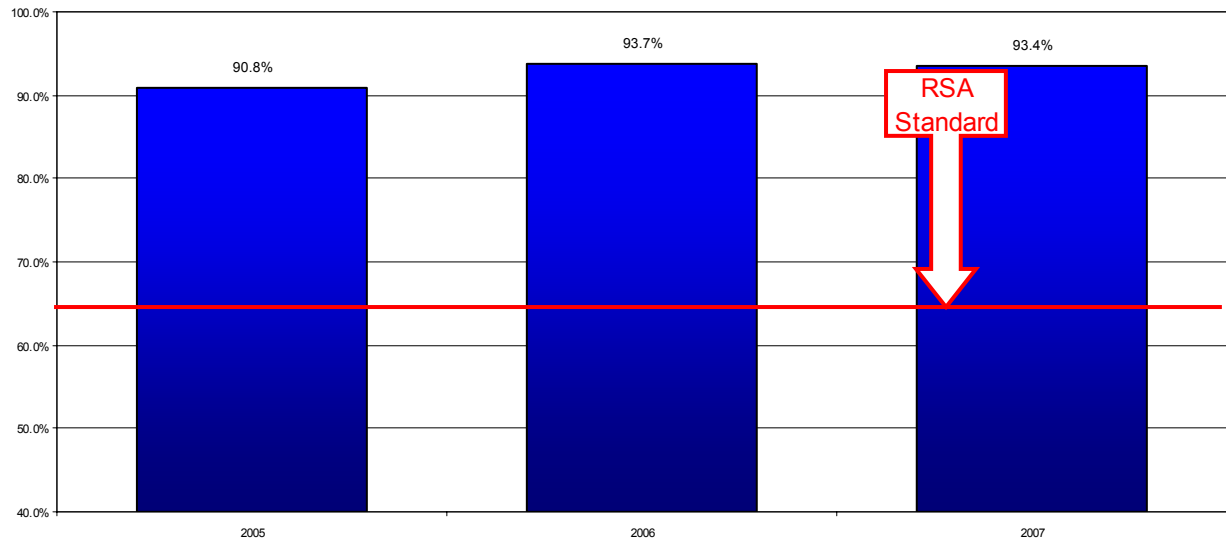
1.2 Percent of Successfully Employed



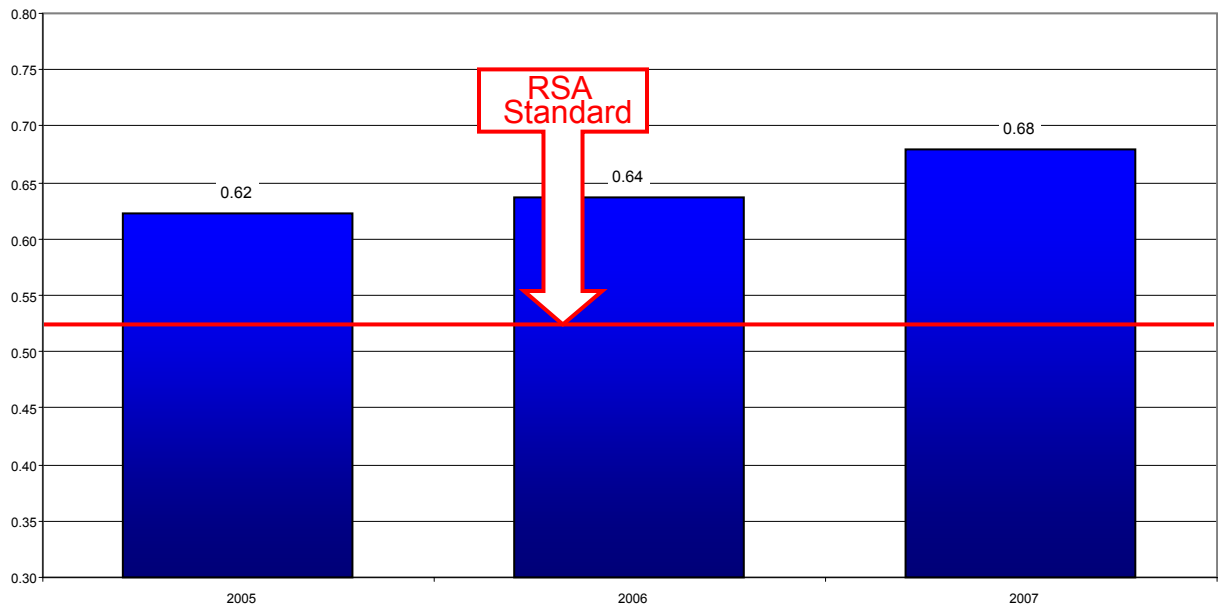
1.3 Percent of Employed Competitively



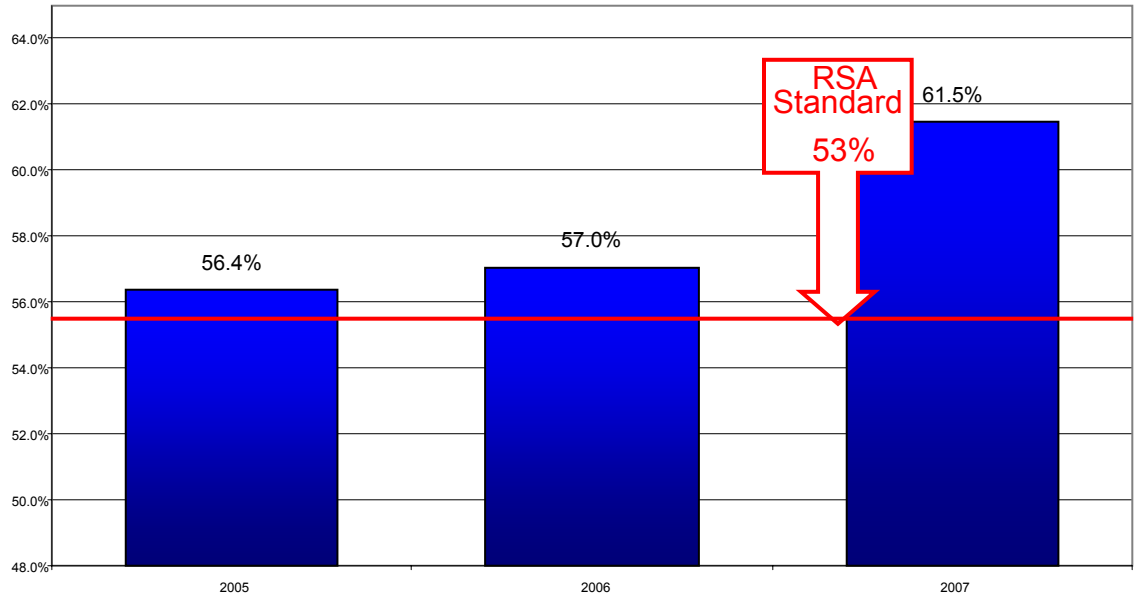
### 1.4 Percent of Individuals With Significant Disabilities



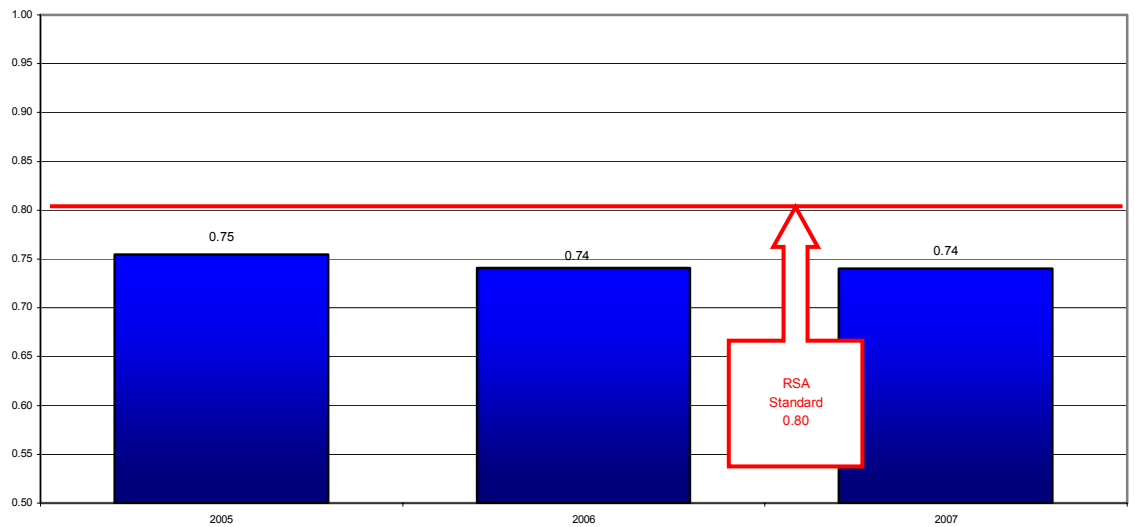
### 1.5 Earnings as a Ratio to the State Average Hourly Earnings



### 1.6 Self-Support at Closure Compared to the Figure at Application



### 2.1 Minorities as a Ratio to the Service Rate for Non-Minorities



## Vocational Rehabilitation: Investing in Iowans

### Vocational rehabilitation is an investment in Iowa

\* Approximately **92 percent of successful clients remain in Iowa**, working, paying taxes and contributing to their communities.

\* A total of **462 clients were on public support for living expenses**. Of those, 227 now support themselves, a **savings of \$1.14 million** for the state.

\* Of those, 71 clients received Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) at the time of their applications. Rehabilitation of these individuals **saves Iowa \$261,708 per year. That's more than \$1 million over five years.**



### The investment pays off

\* The **five-year return on the state's investment is \$8.70 for every \$1** in state tax dollars.

\* A total of 2,126 Iowans with disabilities obtained employment in the 2006 fiscal year.

\* **Their income is an estimated \$36.37 million annually.**

\* After 10 years, **the state receives an average \$759 return on every \$100 originally invested in clients.**

**Based on increased demand for services and the cost of services, the State Rehabilitation Council urges the legislature and governor to appropriate an additional \$286,000 in fiscal 2008. This will allow Iowa to fully match federal dollars that will otherwise go to other states.**

# SRC Member Biographies

**2006 - 2007**

## **Kathryn Baumann-Reese**

Ms. Baumann-Reese completed her second full term on the SRC. She lives in Ankeny and serves as the Administrator of the Deaf Services Commission of Iowa, Department of Human Rights. She represented disability groups on the SRC.

## **Angela Creech**

Ms. Angela Creech (Angie) is a native Iowan, now living in Eastern Iowa, who graduated from the University of Iowa with an MA in Rehabilitation Counseling (2004). She is a member of the Iowa Self-Advocacy & Leadership for Youth with the Disabilities Council. Appointed to the State Independent Living Council, she is the SRC representative on behalf of the SILC. She is employed at the Evert Conner Center in Iowa City.

## **Craig Cretsinger**

Mr. Cretsinger graduated from Spencer High School in 1970. From there he proceeded to Iowa Lakes Community College where he graduated in 1972 with an A.S. degree. In June of 1972 he was involved in a semi-truck accident while working construction for Spencer Construction Company. As the result of the accident, he is now a C-6 partial quadriplegic, uses a manual chair and is quite self-sufficient. He received a degree in Architectural Drafting and Design Technology in Minneapolis, Minnesota. After doing architectural work for four years, he opened and ran a retail sporting goods store in Spencer. Currently he is the IWD Disability Navigator in Spencer.

## **Tamara Fujinaka**

Ms. Fujinaka is a first-term member of the SRC. She received her Bachelor of Arts Degree from Central College and her Masters in Business Administration from Drake. She is the Government Relations Manager for the Iowa Communications Network.

### Barbara Guy

Dr. Barbara Guy is the Transition and Work Experience Consultant for the Bureau of Student and Family Support Services in the Iowa Department of Education. She joined the Department of Education from the University of Minnesota, where she was the Director of the National Transition Network. While at the University of Minnesota, she also served as principle investigator of several research and technical assistance projects related to the secondary transition of youth with disabilities. She represents the Department of Education on the SRC.

### Harlietta Helland

Ms. Helland was the Client Assistance Program (CAP) representative to the SRC until her retirement in Spring 2007. Harlietta was a long-time advocate for IVRS who served on the SRC since 1995.

### Terry L. Johnson

Mr. Johnson of Jefferson, Iowa was appointed to the SRC in 2003. He is the CEO of Genesis Development, a rehabilitation organization. His 30 years in the disability field has led to many experiences and interests in the needs of people with disabilities. Mr. Johnson represents community rehabilitation programs on the SRC.

### Joe Mara

Joe Mara is a second-term member of the SRC, who lives in Carroll, Iowa. He attended high school at Cedar Rapids Regis, but graduated with a GED diploma in 1978 from Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids. Mr. Mara is actively involved with various disability issues.

### Matthew Milner

Matt Milner began his first term on the SRC in 2006. He lives in Ottumwa, is a reporter with The Ottumwa Courier, and is married with two children. Matt represents business and labor but has also benefited from vocational rehabilitation services in adjusting to the effects of Meniere's Disease.

### Marsha Mott

Ms. Mott is in her second term as an appointee to the SRC. She lives in Clear Lake with her husband, Russ, and is beginning her thirteenth year as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in the Mason City Area Office. She has a general caseload and is the office Transition Counselor. Marsha will represent VR counselors.

### [Mari Reynolds](#)

Mari Reynolds is a Des Moines native and graduate of North High School and Grand View College, with a double major in Psychology and Human Services and a minor in Sociology. She has a younger brother, born with multiple disabilities, who is now transitioning to adulthood. She has worked at the ASK Resource Center for five years, for the Parent Training and Information Center of Iowa as a Family Support Coordinator and has completed three courses on mediation. She has also attended many IEP meetings and is knowledgeable about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Transition.

### [Donald Rowen](#)

Mr. Rowen is in his second term to the SRC. He represents labor. Mr. Rowen has worked in the labor movement for over 45 years and is the retired Executive Vice President of the Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO. He is a Korean War Army veteran. He has served 12 years as a board member of Des Moines Area Community College and is serving his fifth three year term on the Polk County Health Services.

### [Lora Shramek](#)

Mrs. Shramek is a first-term member of the SRC. She graduated from the University of Iowa with a BBA in Industrial Relations/Human Resources and has an MBA from Nova Southeastern University. Lora has a disability and represents a disability group on the Council. She has also been appointed to the Commission of Persons with Disabilities. Lora lives with her husband and son in Amana and works as the Administrator for Johnson County Human Resources.

### [Steve Slater](#)

Steve was born and lived most of his life in Waterloo. He has been hearing impaired since birth. Steve is married and has two children. He received a Computer Science degree from the University of Northern Iowa in 2005, and has also received a Machinist certificate and degrees in Mechanical Engineering Technology and Computer Information System. Steve was previously a CNC machinist and currently is a .NET Programmer/Analyst at The CBE Group, Inc.

### [Ellen Sokolowski](#)

Ms. Sokolowski resides in Atlantic and represents the Iowa Rehabilitation Association, an advocacy group, on the SRC. Ellen is employed with IVRS in Council Bluffs as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor at IWCC. She was reappointed to the SRC in July of 2005.

#### Christine Urish

Christine Urish, PhD, OTR/L, BCMH, for the past fourteen years has been a faculty member in the occupational therapy program at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa. Currently she holds the rank of full professor. She is a graduate of the Rehabilitation Counseling Program at the University of Iowa. She is the Past President of NAMI Scott County, Iowa and President of the Iowa Occupational Therapy Association. Dr. Urish was appointed to the SRC in 2006 to represent advocacy groups.

#### Vivian Ver Huel

Ms. Ver Huel is a first-term member of the SRC. She is a rehabilitation teacher at the Iowa Department for the Blind where she has worked for the past seventeen years. She is based in the Des Moines office and provides rehabilitation services throughout south central Iowa.

#### Robert Watson

Mr. Watson is the Marketing Specialist for the Great River Regional Waste Authority. He is the founder of Lee County Works, a program which establishes a work training environment for individuals with mental disabilities.

#### Jackie Wipperman

Ms. Wipperman is the Client Assistance Program (CAP) representative to the SRC and a mandatory member of the SRC with no term limit. Jackie graduated from Drake University's Rehabilitation Counseling Program and is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor. As a client advocate, she represents applicants and clients of IVRS. The CAP program is housed within the Department of Human Rights, Division of Persons with Disabilities. Although her office is located in Des Moines, Jackie does serve the entire state of Iowa and often travels. Jackie and her husband live in Grimes.

#### Stephen A. Wooderson

Mr. Wooderson has worked in the vocational rehabilitation profession since 1981. He began his career as a counselor and has served at all levels of supervision and management prior to his appointment as Administrator of the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services on December 6, 2002.